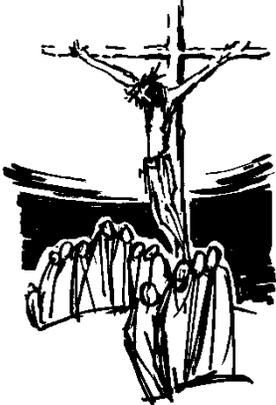


February  
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Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
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*Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." ... When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."*

**John 18:4-9**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we prepare to go through the season of Lent and ponder the passion of our Lord, I was again reading the account of St. John. I was struck how all the different people in the narrative identified who Jesus was and for the most part they all were right on the mark. The only problem, however, was that even though they knew who He was, they were all inevitably drawn to betray, deny, reject and finally, murder Him on a cross.

Not much has changed in 2,000 years. Many people still know who Jesus Christ was and is and can correctly identify Him by what is written about Him in the Bible, but they are still betraying, denying, rejecting, and seeking to destroy Him or at least His Body (the Church). The devil, the world, and our own sin-fallen flesh, tempt even the strongest Christians to want to get rid of Jesus, not only because His presence in our hearts creates a struggle against the old law-breaker (Adam) within us, but He also creates a struggle between us and those who are of this world and under the control of the evil one.

But thanks be to God that He, through the working of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, enables us to successfully battle evil from within and without. Through the blessed Gospel we are assured of the complete forgiveness of all of our sin that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ won for us through His suffering, death, and resurrection from the dead. May God in His grace and mercy bless us as we make this journey through Lent together. I pray He deepen your faith and trust in Him as we meditate on His passion.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Skelton



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Words from the Cross